

“SAFE MODE” -- Win Vista -- Win 7 -- Win 8.1

What is it?

Safe Mode is a special way for Windows to start when there is a system-critical problem that interferes with the normal operation of Windows. The purpose of Safe Mode is to allow you to troubleshoot Windows and try to determine what is causing Windows to not function correctly.

Safe Mode is an option that lets you start Windows in a “limited state”. Normally only the basic files and drivers necessary to run Windows are started. There is, however, an option that will allow you to also have internet access while in **Safe Mode**.

As noted above, when you use **Safe Mode** only specific Microsoft generic drivers and settings will be loaded on start up. If you look at the bottom right corner of the “system tray” you will see that few, if any, of your normal startup programs are running. The reason for this is, if you have a malfunctioning piece of hardware or software, you do not want it to be running while you are trying to remedy your problem.

When might you want to use it?

If Windows does not function normally.

If your computer has become infected with a virus or malware.

If your computer does not function normally after you have added new hardware or software.

How do I know I’m in Safe Mode?

The words “**Safe Mode**” will appear on all four corners of your monitor verifying that you have entered this trouble shooting mode.

How do I use it?

Once in **Safe Mode** you will have access to utility and diagnostic programs that you can use to troubleshoot and find out what is preventing the operating system from working normally. **Safe Mode**, however, is intended for maintenance, not functionality, and therefore you may have minimal access to normal computer features.

Try to determine what has changed on your system that could be causing Windows to fail to boot properly.

If you have added any new hardware go to **Control Panel > System > Device Manager** and double click on the hardware you added. On the ensuing screen click on “**Drivers**” and finally click on “**Disable**”. Then attempt a reboot. If Windows boots properly you can be reasonably certain that there was some type of conflict with the device you disabled.

If you have loaded a new game or application use **RevoUninstaller** and remove the software. Again, try a reboot and see if you have resolved your problem.

If you think that you might have contracted a virus or malware run your **anti-virus** program and **Malwarebytes**. Have these programs check your entire computer, including a flash drive if installed.

If you can not resolve your problem in **Safe Mode**, and you can access **System Restore**, try to restore your computer to an earlier date. If **System Restore** does not solve your problem, and you definitely know that it is not a new hardware or software problem, then you could very well have a corrupted Registry File. If this is the case you may have to perform a complete re-install of your Windows operating system.

How do I enter Safe Mode?

There are three ways that you can enter the **Safe Mode** in Win Vista and Win 7:

1 – As soon as you push the start button to power up your computer begin tapping the F-8 key. This should give you a screen where you can ultimately select **Safe Mode**. If your computer bypasses this screen and goes into Windows, and to the desktop, restart your computer and try tapping F-8 again. Refer to the **Advanced Boot Options** info sheet for specific directions on how to get into **Safe Mode** using this procedure.

2 – If your computer will boot up you can enter “**Safe Mode**” by going through the **System Configuration Utility**. Use the following procedures:

For Windows 7 only: Click on the **Start** button, click on **Run** and type “**msconfig**” (no quote marks) in the dialogue box and click **OK**. When the **System Configuration** utility screen opens click on the **Boot** tab and under **Boot Options** put a check in the **Safe Boot** box and then click **OK**. Click **Restart** when asked.

For Windows Vista only: Click the **Start** button, and then click on **All Programs > Accessories > Run**. In the dialogue box type “**msconfig**” (no quote marks) and click **OK**. When the **System Configuration** utility screen opens click on the **Boot** tab and under **Boot Options** put a check in the **Safe Boot** box and then click **OK**. Click **Restart** when asked.

When using the above procedures you will need to re-renter the **System Configuration** utility after you are finished with the **Safe Mode** operation and once again click on the **Boot** tab, and under **Boot Options** un-check **Safe Boot**. If you do not do this your computer will always start in Safe Mode.

3 – If you are on the desktop, push and hold your power button until your computer shuts off. When you restart your computer it should automatically give you a screen where you can select to enter into Safe Mode. Of the three options to enter Safe Mode this should be your last choice.

If you see a dialogue box asking “Do you want this program to make changes to your computer”, click “Yes.

For Windows 8 and 8.1 only:

Procedures # 1 & # 3 listed above may, or may not work with Win 8 and 8.1

The following procedure should work satisfactorily: If your computer will boot to the desktop. Continuously hold down the **Shift** key and **Restart** your computer. When your computer reboots it will bring up a screen offering you several options, one of which will be “**Troubleshoot**”. Clicking on **Troubleshoot** will bring up a screen offering you three more options. Click on **Advanced Options**, and when the **Advanced Options** screen opens click on **Startup Settings**. On the **Startup Settings** screen click on **Restart**. One final screen will appear giving you numerous options. Select option # 4 (or # 5 if you want to have the option to access the internet.)

The Bottom Line!

Before you call a “techie”, or take your computer to a repair shop, give **Safe Mode** and **System Restore** a shot. It is very possible that you can repair your computer yourself and save yourself hundreds of \$\$\$.